

1John 2:15-17

The apostle Paul wrote Timothy

As he came to the end of his earthly life and reflected on his ministry

Having faithfully accomplished his ministry

He was looking forward to the joys that awaited him in heaven

But at the same time he was acutely aware of those he would leave behind

He was particularly concerned for young Timothy

Whom we now call – and I think unfairly call - timid Timothy

He wrote – God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power, love and discipline. Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me, His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the Gospel, according to the power of God. Retain the standard of sound words which you heard from me.

Paul reminded Timothy that many had already deserted him

Perhaps the most notorious defector among Paul's associates

Appears in 2Timothy chapter 4 – Demas having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica

Demas was apparently a close associate of Paul

Yet despite having been in the presence of Paul and seen his works

Despite having seen the power of the Word of God

Having heard the preaching of the entire Gospel

Demas utterly abandoned Paul

He loved the world system with its sin – its pleasures – its satanic deception

More than he loved God

He didn't just desert Paul – Demas deserted the call of God on his life

His faith was like the seed that fell on thorny soil

Remember that seed – it sprung up

But it was choked by the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches

So it became unfruitful – nothing came of it

Demas forsook his fellow laborers and went to a city that offered

All the materialistic immoral allurements of the world he loved

And in doing so he showed that he was not a lover of God

Demas provides a Biblical example of the love God hates

Was Demas saved – only the Lord knows for sure

What we do know is that he never really left the world

And when you don't forsake the world
When trials and hardship come - it is so easy to return to it
The love of God is a theme that runs throughout Scripture
But God also hates
Listen carefully - Because God loves perfectly He also hates perfectly
God loves all that is holy and righteous
God loves everything that is in line with His will and His purpose
He hates that which threatens or opposes His will and His purpose
And He strongly desires that you also hate that which He hates
Psalm 97 – Hate evil, you who love the Lord
God despises those things that steal His glory or destroy His people
This short passage describes a major object of God's hatred – the world
The world steals God's glory and destroys God people
So it is not on God's list of favorite things
The passage breaks down into the command
And the reasons for the command

The command is simple
Do not love the world nor the things in the world
When John tells us not to love the world
He is not speaking of the physical world
Even though creation has been marred by sin
Nature's physical beauty still reflects God's glory and leads us to worship
Ps 109 – The heavens declare the glory of God, and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.
John is also not telling us to hate the world of men and women
That would be against why Jesus came
God loves people
1John 2:2 – And He Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not ours only, but also for the whole world
There is a wonderful song by Point of Grace that declares
God loves people more than anything
It was to redeem rebellious sinful people that God sent Jesus
If it isn't the physical world and it's not humanity
Then just what is John telling us not to love

John does not want us to love this world system nor the things it has to offer

The world system has been put in place, and is controlled, by Satan

And there are things in the world that still attract us

When we were saved

We were transferred from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God

And John is simply saying – don't look back

Paul reminded the Ephesians – You formerly lived according to this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is still working in the sons of disobedience

Later on in this Letter John flat out states

The whole world lies in the power of the evil one

And because the world is in his power it hates God and those who are God's

Knowing this Jesus told us that if we live for Him

We should expect the world to hate us just as it hated Jesus

It was those controlled by the wicked demonic ideologies and enterprises

Who put Jesus on the cross

So why would you want to love a system

That hates you and is set up to corrupt you

Instead of loving them we are told to bring down these systems

To break their grip over the lives of others

Paul to the Corinthians – We do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.

Speculations means ideologies or belief systems

It ranges from primitive animism to sophisticated complex world religions

Philosophies, political theories or any unbiblical worldview

It represents ideas and dogmas that are against the true knowledge of God

Believers are commanded to confront and destroy the world's lies

We are to do it with prayer and with truth

1 Peter 2 – For you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness (this world system), and into His marvelous light. – The kingdom of God

We are not able to destroy that which is against God

When we live our lives as part of it

So we are to oppose this world system, not corrupt ourselves by loving it

We are to speak the truth and we are to live the truth

I understand that in a barn fire horses who are taken to safety out of the barn

Will try to run back into the barn even though it means their death
We have been rescued from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of God's Son
Yet so many long to return to that from which they have been rescued
So John is telling us – Don't run back into the fire

John commands us – do not love the world
Then John gives us reasons not to love the world (READ 15-17)
I met with a lady who said she saw the good in both
So her goal was to merge New Age and Christianity
She had one big problem
The kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world are incompatible
They are mutually exclusive and opposed to each other
So Christians can never be satisfied by the things the world has to offer
And non-Christians will never long for the things of God
There is an unmistakable line of demarcation
Between the things of God and the things of the world
The attack on marriage – the promotion of sexual promiscuity
An emphasis on materialism and personal comfort
A decline of standards for personal integrity and business ethics
The list could go on for a long time – but you get my point
The world is far away from God and the distance is growing

John gives us three general reasons to not love the world
The first reason we are not to love the world is because of who we are
I might even say because of whose we are
Because believers are forgiven and indwelt by the Spirit of God
They cannot love the world
We can be attracted by it – we can even be deceived by it and lured into it
But we cannot love the world
For anyone who truly loves the world
Demonstrates that the love of the Father is not in him
We are God's children – indwelt by His Spirit – His love is in us
But that does not make us impervious to the world's allure
Because of uncrucified flesh believers are tempted

To chase after that which the world has to offer

Whether the temptation comes from worldly priorities

Worldly amusements – worldly riches – or worldly lusts

These temptations are real and seductive

But it is imperative that we overcome

Jesus warned His followers – No man can serve two masters, for he will either hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other.

We belong to God - He is our Master – it is Him alone we should serve

We should not love the world because of who we are

We should not love the world because of what the world does

You see - sin is the dominant reality in this world

Scripture states that everything that men and women do is tainted by sin

Even the good things they do

When you hear the phrase – Total Depravity

It doesn't mean that we can't get any worse – you know we can

It means that everything we do is affected by sin – everything

Sin is the lack of conformity to God's nature and the violation of His Law

The Law of God encompasses all that is righteous

And it isn't righteous just because God has decreed it so

God's Law is righteous

Because it comes out of the very character of God

The Law displays God's heart

Sin is by its very nature rebellious and ungrateful

Sin is humanly incurable

Sinners have no capacity within themselves to remedy their sin

Isaiah described it this way – people weighed down with iniquity, The whole head is sick; the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot, even to the head, there is nothing sound in it.

Finally sin is universal

This is one case where the statement “everybody is doing it” – is true

Scripture tells us – there is none righteous not even one – all have sinned

It is because people are sinful that evil overpowers fallen mankind

All unregenerate people can do and think about is sin

Sin utterly dominates their mind wills and affections

It is because of sin that men are slaves to the prince of darkness

They are in his kingdom – literally under his control – he is the boss

It is because of sin that the unredeemed remain under the wrath of God

Unless they repent they are destined for eternal hell

It is because of sin that people are subject to the miseries of this life

With no ultimate satisfaction

The Book of Job tells us – Man is born for trouble

Solomon wrote - I have seen all the works that have been done under the sun, and behold all is vanity, striving after wind

There is no ultimate satisfaction in sin

Now although this world is under Satan's control

And filled with temptations to sin

Personal sin cannot be blamed on external circumstances

The sinner is responsible for his sinful actions

The devil didn't make you do it – you did it because you wanted to

Jesus said – Out of the heart of men proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness

Now understanding the serious danger sin poses

John summarizes the three avenues the world uses to incite us to sin

The lust of the flesh – the lust of the eyes – the boastful pride of life

When the Bible uses the term “flesh”

It is denoting humanness in its sinful essence

The lust of the flesh refers to the corrupt cravings of evil hearts

The phrase brings to mind sexual sins

And while they are included they aren't the only ones in the definition

It would include drugs alcohol over-eating and sexual sins

But that is not a complete list

Anything that the body craves beyond what is God-ordained is a lust of the flesh

Sex in marriage is good but sin has perverted it

We need food to survive but sin has perverted it

Many of the sins of the flesh are normal activities

Either done to excess or done outside God's declared boundaries

And remember God did not put boundaries on us because He is a killjoy

He is not some cosmic Scrooge making sure we don't have any fun

God has put boundaries on us for our good

He knows how He created us - He knows what we are like

He knows that many of the things we desire are just flat out harmful to us
God's commandments were given to help us live a happy life
For instance you can break down the Ten Commandments this way
Four tell you how to live at peace with God
One tells you how to live peacefully with your parents
And five tell you how to live at peace with your neighbor
The world also entices us to thoughts and actions contrary to God's will
Through the lust of the eyes
Eyes are a gift from God that allow us to see His creation
Sin has perverted the use of the eyes
So just as they let in light
Our eyes are an open window for temptation to enter
They entice us to covetousness idolatry and dissatisfaction
Lot's wife looked back at the things she left behind and died
Achan coveted the goods of the city of Jericho and died
David saw Bathsheba bathing and it led to adultery and murder
It is imperative for us to guard our eyes
Job said – I have made a covenant with my eyes, I shall not look upon a virgin
Make a pact with your eyes
When you see something that entices you to sin – don't walk – run
Run to the nearest place of safety

The third element of the world that entices us to sin
Is the boastful pride of life
Pride is the sin of Satan who wanted Jesus place in heaven
Pride is the sin of Adam who believed he didn't need God
Pride is the forerunner and the worst of - all sins
Pride is arguably the arrogance that motivates all other sin
Pride is the corruption of the noblest parts of man's essence and soul
Instead of accepting reality with humility and joy
Sinful pride has caused us to exalt ourselves and seek fulfillment
In things that glorify us rather than God
It was pride that cost Ananias and Sapphira their lives
Pride is that feeling within us that life is about us

Our first thought always is – How does this affect me
What can I gain from this – what might I lose
Pride keeps us from fulfilling the law of love
Pride puts us first rather than sacrificing for our fellow believers
Pride causes us to defy God and place ourselves upon the throne of our lives
If you were to make a list of all the times
Pride pops up in your life during a normal week
I believe the list would shock you

We should not love the world because of who we are
We should not love the world because the things in the world tempt us to sin
We should not love the world because it is passing away
The things this world has to offer us are temporary
Even the pleasure of sin is temporary – but its effects aren't
The world gives instant gratification and long-term guilt
Immediate pleasure with long-term consequences
And we live on a temporary planet under the temporary influence of Satan
Not something we should get too accustomed to nor set our hearts on
The word translated – “passing away” literally means “to disappear”
Scripture is pretty clear that the only things
God will take off this planet are His Word and His people
Everything else – everything else will be consumed
So don't fall in love with that which is temporary
God has plans for planet earth and they don't involve us
As children of God we need to live our lives with an eternal perspective
We need to focus on that which will last forever - God's people God's Word
Now when he says the world is passing away
John is specifically thinking about
The satanic world system that is opposed to God and Christ
They are hurtling rapidly toward certain eternal damnation
On the other hand John tells us
The one who does the will of God abides forever
You and I are going to live forever
Those who are saved have nothing to fear concerning the world's destruction

Now here is the greatest news for those who are in Christ
We have nothing to fear on this planet – Jesus is with us
He understands our needs
He will never leave us nor forsake us – He will provide for us
And we have nothing to fear when we leave this planet
For God has already provided for our eternity
Turn to your neighbor and tell them – God has plans for you

I am going to read from Gal 5, and as I do, I want you to close your eyes
And think about which of these sins is particularly troubling to you
Then admit your failures
And commit to God that with His help you will overcome (READY)
Now the deeds of the flesh are evident - immorality, impurity, sensuality
Will you commit to give up the magazines and books and movies and the internet or whatever it is that
draws you into the pit of the flesh – that woman that man
Idolatry, sorcery – if you have put anything or anyone this world ahead of God
That is what or who you are worshipping
Enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissension, factions – All of these are evidences
of pride in your life
Who is it you don't get along with
What have you done to cause it – can it be resolved
Are you the exalted one expecting others to serve you or are you a servant
Envy – Envy goes hand in hand with coveting. Can you make a covenant with your eyes that you
will not focus on what God has given others, but be content with what He has given you
Drunkenness carousing and things like these – The fellowship of the world offers no hope no real relief
from your feelings of insecurity. Let me assure you, just when you need those who lead you astray –
they will not be there
Paul says - Don't get drunk, but be filled with the Spirit
That of course is the answer to every issue of sin
When you are filled with the Spirit you will exhibit the character of Christ
Love - joy - peace - patience - kindness - goodness – faithfulness - gentleness and self-control